

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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COMUSMACTHAI

S E C R E T BANGKOK 12579

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, CB, VS, TH

SUBJ: FORMER CAMBODIAN AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY EQUIPMENT

1. DURING MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT JUNE 27, THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED THE STATUS OF THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN THAILAND WHICH HAD COME FROM SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA PRIOR TO THE FALL OF MILITARY GOVERNMENTS IN THOSE COUNTRIES. HE STRESSED THE URGENCY OF RESOLVING THIS PROBLEM AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE SINCE THE PLANES ARE DETERIORATING RAPIDLY AND NOTED THAT WE WANT IN PARTICULAR TO MOVE OUT ONE F5E AND SIX C-7S IMMEDIATELY. WE CAN DO THIS QUIETLY AS A PART OF THE RETROGRADE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN CONNECTION WITH OUR MILITARY DRAWDOWNS.

2. KHUKRIT AGREED IMMEDIATELY THAT WE COULD REMOVE THE F5E AND C7S. HE URGED THAT WE DO THIS DISCREETLY AND SAID THE RTG WOULD DENY THAT THESE PLANES EVER EXISTED IF THE ISSUE SHOULD BE RAISED BY HANOI OR SAIGON.

3. REGARDING THE REMAINING PLANES, KHUKRIT SAID THE THAI GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT THEM. IF THEY ARE LEFT IN THAILAND THERE IS DANGER THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI (WHO WAS PRESENT AND GRIMACED) MAY TURN THEM OVER TO THE VIETNAMESE. KHUKRIT SAID "IF THE PLANES DON'T EXIST, I WILL BE HAPPY."

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4. THIS GIVES US THE GREEN LIGHT TO MOVE OUT THE F5E AND THE

C-7S AND WE WILL DO SO OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS WHEN THIS CAN BE DONE QUIETLY. DESPITE KHUKRIT'S HALF FACETIOUS REMARKS, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD TURN OVER TO THE THAI THOSE PLANES FOR WHICH WE ALREADY HAVE WASHINGTON'S APPROVAL. REGARDING THE REMAINDER, WE CAN, ON THE BASIS OF KHUKRIT'S COMMENT, REMOVE ANY OTHERS WHICH WE REALLY NEED. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED AND THEIR CONDITION, WE STRONGLY URGE THAT MOST OF THESE BE GIVEN TO THE THAI ARMED FORCES. IN DOING SO, WE WILL BLANKET THESE AIRCRAFT UNDER THE 1950 MILITARY AID AGREEMENT WHICH PREVENTS THEIR DISPOSITION WITHOUT OUR APPROVAL. THE THAI ARMED FORCES WILL INCORPORATE THESE PLANES INTO THEIR INVENTORY AND THEY WILL, AS KHUKRIT WISHES, DISAPPEAR. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS IS THE BEST SOLUTION TO THIS TROUBLESOME PROBLEM AND WOULD LIKE TO PROCEED IMMEDIATELY ALONG THESE LINES. PLEASE ADVISE.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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